



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

National Marine Fisheries Service

P.O. Box 21668

Juneau, Alaska 99802-1668

February 23, 2004

MEMORANDUM FOR: Rolland A. Schmitten
Director, Office of Habitat Conservation

FROM: James W. Balsiger
Administrator, Alaska Region

SUBJECT: AOC v. Daley Status Report

The following is the Alaska Region's input for the agency's March 2004 status report for the AOC v. Daley lawsuit, per the December 19, 2001 Joint Stipulation and Order.

1. NMFS and the North Pacific Fishery Management Council completed the *Draft Environmental Impact Statement for Essential Fish Habitat Identification and Conservation in Alaska* (DEIS). NMFS filed the DEIS with the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) on January 9, 2004 and posted the document on the internet the same day at www.fakr.noaa.gov/habitat/seis/efheis.htm. EPA published a notice of availability in the Federal Register on January 16, 2004 (69 FR 2593). NMFS distributed copies of the DEIS to the plaintiffs and other interested parties. NMFS is accepting public comments through April 15, 2004.
2. In response to its call for proposals for Habitat Areas of Particular Concern (HAPCs) and associated fishery management measures for Alaska fisheries, the Council received 23 proposals, including four from NMFS. The proposals would restrict fishing to protect areas of coral, seamounts, and other habitats. At its February 2004 meeting, the Council provided additional direction for the review of those proposals for technical merit, socioeconomic factors, and enforcement considerations to help the Council determine which proposals to analyze in detail. NMFS issued a notice (69 FR 8178; February 23, 2004) for a public meeting of the Council's Plan Teams to the review the HAPC proposals on March 8 - 9, 2004.

cc: Karen Abrams, F/HC
Cindy Hartmann and Jon Kurland, F/AKR4
John Lepore, GCAK
Stacey Nathanson, GCF
NPFMC
Records

